

Survey gives educators voice on workplace strengths, needs

School leadership is the working condition that most affects a teacher's willingness to stay working in their school, according to the more than 4,000 Delaware educators who responded to the 2017 TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning) Delaware survey.

The majority of Delaware educators feel their schools' curricula is aligned to state standards, use assessment data to inform their instruction, have time to collaborate with peers and have school leaders who facilitate using data to improve student learning and encourage trying new things to improve instruction. They also feel they work in a safe environment, are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction and provide families with useful information about student learning.

Those are a few of the highlights of the results, available at the school, district and state-level at www.telldelaware.org/results.

The survey also showed remaining challenges, particularly around the constructive use of time. Many educators feel class sizes don't allow them enough time to meet the needs of all students, more non-instructional time is needed for teachers and more could be done to minimize paperwork and differentiate professional learning to meet individual educator needs.

"Teachers' voices are critical to shaping Delaware's education policy. The results of this survey will help the state better equip districts and schools with the tools they need to help our students succeed," Governor John Carney said. "I look forward to working with educators across our state to improve outcomes for all students."

Districts and schools that had at least a 50 percent participation rate in the survey now have local reports that will allow their leaders to closely review their own data to and identify strengths and areas for growth for their districts and schools. The responses of those educators whose schools or districts did not meet the threshold are included in the aggregate district and state data.

This was the second time Delaware conducted the TELL survey, following the inaugural administration of the anonymous survey in 2013.

Secretary of Education Susan Bunting thanked educators for taking the time to share their opinions.

“This was an opportunity for our teachers and school leaders to let us know what is working well and where more focus is needed. This information can help shape policy and programs that support work and learning environments that meet our educators’ needs and support student achievement,” she said.

The 2017 results show strong progress made in some areas when compared to the responses to the same questions in 2013. For example, more educators said new teacher supports and professional learning are meeting their needs, indications that state investments in Delaware’s novice teacher mentoring and induction program and professional learning are paying off.

Mentoring/induction

- 78 percent of novice teachers (those with less than three years of teaching experience) said the additional support they received as a new teacher improved their instructional practice, compared to 64 percent in 2013
- 79 percent of novice teachers said the additional support they received as a new teacher has helped them to impact student learning, compared to 65 percent in 2013.

- 82 percent of novice teachers said support from their mentor teacher influenced their practice of instructional strategies, compared to 60 percent in 2013.
- 81 percent of novice teachers said support from their mentor teacher influenced their practice of providing emotional support, compared to 62 percent in 2013.
- 84 percent of novice teachers said support from their mentor influenced their practice of classroom management, compared to 56 percent in 2013.

Professional learning

When teachers were asked to identify professional learning needed to teach students more effectively, their responses indicated that more educators feel they are getting the professional learning they need:

- 70 percent said they needed professional learning related to standards in 2013, compared to 30 percent in 2017.
- 51 percent said they needed professional learning related to student assessments in 2013, compared to 35 percent in 2017.
- 50 percent said they needed professional learning related to reading strategies in 2013, compared to 38 percent in 2017.
- 63 percent said they needed professional learning related to closing the achievement gap in 2013, compared to 53 percent in 2017.
- 63 percent said they needed professional learning related to special education in 2013, compared to 56 percent in 2017.

The 2017 results indicate some other areas for continued focus. For example, only 46 percent of responding teachers agreed that state assessment data are available to teachers in time to impact instructional practices, suggesting the state

needs to do more to promote use of [Smarter Analytics](#), which provides teachers with in-depth data on their students' performance within three weeks of test administration. Using the system, which launched in 2016, teachers have the ability to determine each student's understanding of the Smarter claims and targets and how they align to the Delaware standards.

The **TELL Delaware** survey is an anonymous statewide survey of licensed school-based educators to assess teaching conditions at the school, district and state level. The Delaware Department of Education, partnered with Delaware State Education Association, Delaware Association of School Administrators, Delaware School Boards Association, and the national New Teacher Center to conduct the 2017 TELL Delaware survey this spring. The TELL Survey is a full population survey designed to report educators' perceptions about the presence of teaching and learning conditions. School-based licensed educators were able to complete the survey anytime 24 hours a day, from any Internet location using the anonymous access code provided.

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